IAN RUTHERFORD

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SCOTLAND ON SUNDAY 21/1/90

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T/SOR/23/3/1

AYRSHIRE HUNT

SUBJECT: [illegible]

As you expect you are aware, we have had regular visits this season from the Saboteurs, resulting in some extremely unpleasant incidents.

Your Committee is naturally very concerned about this, and I am writing to you to explain the current situation and to give your Committee's advice on what to do if an incident occurs.

Firstly, as regards Ayr division of Strathclyde Police (which covers all the hunting country South of a line between Irvine and Kilmarnock excluding Cumnock and the Galston country) an Inspector [illegible] of Prestwick Police has been appointed to look into all complaints that have already been made, and there have been quite a number, and to prepare a report for the Commander of the division about the whole Hunt Saboteur/Hunting situation.

Police advice to date is that they will investigate and report to the procurator fiscal cases where there are examples of:

a) obscene language (a breach of the peace) where there is a minimum of one other witness

b) threatening behaviour - a number of instances [illegible] being told they would be: attacked later, or, in the case of children, followed to school, or their way barred by saboteurs who would not let the children pass unless they promised never to hunt again - [illegible] there is one other witness to the incident

or c) either of the above where there are no witnesses, but [illegible] other very similar instances have occurred involving the same offenders.

As far as direct interference with the activities of the Hunt are concerned, we are currently making representations to the Police that a saboteur blowing a hunting horn is a breach of the peace, in the same way that someone running onto a football pitch blowing a whistle is committing a breach of the peace. Apparently the Police's views on this will be largely coloured by the view of the Procurator Fiscal.

In the meantime your Committee's advice if one of the incidents outlined above, or indeed any other serious incident occurs ...

do NOT retaliate. I know that this is easier said than done but this is exactly the reaction that the Saboteurs want so do not give them that satisfaction. In any case it is our aim to win the support and co-operation of the Police and we must behave in an impeccable manner and show that we

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Police advice to date is that they will investigate and report to the procurator fiscal cases where there are examples of:

a) obscene language (a breach of the peace) where there is a minimum of one other witness

b) threatening behaviour - a number of instances have occurred where individual members of the field have been [illegible] being told they would be: attacked later, or, in the case of children, followed to school, or their way barred by saboteurs who would not let the children pass unless they promised never to hunt again - again as there is one other witness to the incident

or c) either of the above where there are no witnesses, but where other very similar instances have occurred involving the same offenders.

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